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## DR. PETERMANN'S VIEWS OF IMPORTANT POINTS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN EXPLORATIONS.

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[Translated from Dr. Petermann's "Geographical Communication."]

VIENNA, *November 22, 1875.*

The year 1875, which has brought us so many bitter disappointments in West African expeditions, recompenses us by great success in Equatorial Africa. We can scarcely call this success unexpected, for Mr. Stanley had already proved, on the occasion of his journey in search of Livingstone, that he combined unbending resolution with great skill, and that he understood how to carry out a great plan of exploration in spite of all hindrance. As then, Stanley is supported with sufficient supplies and money; and his past experiences led us to anticipate even more favorable results than before. It created just astonishment when James Gordon Bennett sent a correspondent of his paper, the *New York Herald*, at a cost of thousands of dollars, to search for Livingstone in the interior of Africa. "My father," said he to Stanley, "has made the *New York Herald* a great newspaper, and I hope to make it still greater. I will publish all the news that can interest the whole world, however much it may cost." One could foresee that if the plan for finding the long-lost Livingstone should prove successful, it would cause the greatest excitement, and would give the *New York Herald* much honor. Mr. Bennett's efforts were, therefore, said at first to be nothing more than speculative ones, but when Stanley was sent out last year, for the second time, at the cost of the *New York Herald* and of the *London Daily Telegraph*, accompanied by a number of European servants, well supplied with wares, arms, astronomical and other scientific instruments, the use of which he had learned and practiced, and especially with a large and portable yacht, capable of being taken to pieces, for the purpose of sailing on and exploring the Central African lakes, and to complete the explorations of Livingstone, it was shown that the enterprise of the *New York Herald* was not based on a mere clamor after effect or a grasping at sensation, but that it had conceived the mission of a great newspaper in a magnificent and hitherto unheard of spirit, and was endeavoring to make its reportorial system one of exploration; and

certainly that new system could not have been commenced in a more auspicious manner; and through Stanley Mr. Bennett has achieved a second and more important success than the brilliant one which at first made him famous.

#### STANLEY'S GRAND EFFORT.

The writer then goes on to describe Stanley's journey until he reached the Victoria Nyanza, and says: "After a march of 103 days he stood, on the 27th of February, 1875, on the shores of the lake which Captain Speke discovered in July, 1858, and declared to be the principal lake source of the Nile." Speke endeavored, in a second journey with Grant (1859-1863), to prove the connection of this lake with the Nile, but in this he was not completely successful, and his report, therefore, found just as many opponents as adherents. His old companion in exploration, Captain Richard Burton, became particularly hostile to him, and endeavored to show that the discovery of the Victoria lake was a matter of no importance, to put in its place a group of smaller lakes, and also sought to show that the Tanganyika was the principal lake source of the Nile.

Supported by the differences in the altitudes which Speke had found at the southern and northern shores of the lake, and by the representation that there were a number of effluents on the northern side of the lake on Speke's map, Burton's views found acceptance in many quarters, and the services of Speke and Grant were almost forgotten, although Baker, in 1864, corroborated and confirmed a number of their assertions in regard to the outlet of the Victoria Nyanza. Indeed, in recent years, the representations of a group of lakes on the place of the great Victoria lake became constantly more frequent on the charts, and their right to be placed there appeared to have been corroborated in 1874 by Colonel Long, who, from the north shore of the lake, could only perceive the lake extending southward a short distance.

It was reserved for Stanley to prove the truth of Speke's views in two great points. Evidently gifted with an appreciation of geographical science, he induced Livingstone, in 1871, to explore with him the northern end of the Tanganyika, and he found, instead of the outlet which had been supposed, by Burton and many others, a compact basin, with unimportant mountain streams feeding it, just as Speke had narrated. In 1874 Lieutenant Cameron discovered that the Tanganyika had its outlet on the western side, sending its waters to the Lualaba Congo, and therefore could not belong to the system of the

Nile. The second point, the unity of the Victoria Nyanza, has now been made a certainty by Stanley's voyage round the entire lake in the months of March and May of the present year. His map, as published in the New York Herald, and the chart, shows a well outlined shore, with numerous groups of adjacent islands, while Speke could only show mostly undefined outlines; but both agree in the great fact, especially when we compare with Stanley's the modification of Speke's chart, necessitated by Wakefield's inquiries — especially the separation of Baringo lake from the Victoria Nyanza.

The details, where Speke himself saw the shore, agree in a satisfactory manner. Thus we see, after the lapse of a dozen years, the discoverer of the lake vindicated, his descriptions verified, and his fame purified from all suspicions of having given us pictures of his own fantasy, instead of the truth. Unfortunately he was not permitted to live to experience this satisfaction, but it is, nevertheless, a matter at which to rejoice that his companion now sees verified and acknowledged that which they achieved together through long years of labor and suffering; and every one will deeply sympathize with the words which Grant wrote to the author of these lines: "This is a glorious verification for me, after so many, like Burton, and even the great Livingstone, have refused to receive our accounts. They cut up the lake into a number, and called them lagoons; but I have never deviated from the truth, and thank God that I live to see my dear, true friend Speke vindicated by Mr. Stanley in his geography of that interesting equatorial region. Speke always gave a sober, moderate report of what he saw or heard. Exaggeration was not in his nature; facts were his motto."

The most southern, and at the same time the most important feeder of the lake, was found by Stanley to be the Shimeeyu, which is said to rise in 5° south and 35° east, in the land of Urimi, and after a course of 350 miles flows into the lake eastward of Speke's Jordan. Whether this Shimeeyu may be considered as the true source of the Nile depends on two further problems which have yet to be decided by Stanley.

Not satisfied with the exploration of the Victoria Nyanza, the young American is about to proceed to the Albert Nyanza or Mwutan to explore that lake in the Lady Alice. On the one hand, he is to examine if this lake receives tributaries which may claim precedence over the Victoria Nile or Somerset river; that is, whether it may have a greater right to be looked upon as the principal feeder of the Nile. On the other hand, he must definitively decide the connec-

tion of the Mwutan with the Nile. Speke had accepted this connection from the communications of natives and traders. Baker has, later, made this very probable, though it is not yet entirely without doubt, nor will it be until a traveler shall have seen, with his own eyes, the outlet of the lake and followed it to the known portion of the White Nile.

Like Speke, so Baker learned from the natives, especially from King Kamrasi, of Unyoro, that the Somerset river, immediately after entering the Mwutan, leaves it again and continued its course as a navigable river, between the lands Koschi and Madi. From Magungo (2°, 16' north), the point where the Somerset enters the Mwutan, Baker saw towards the north, at a distance of eighteen miles, the place where the river left the lake — the lands Madi on the east and Koschi on the west, as well as a mountain ridge accompanying the river on its left side. He could not proceed down the river because his followers feared the hostile Madi, and it appeared more important to follow that part of the Somerset river from its mouth up north to Karuma falls, which Speke had not seen. So perfectly convinced was Baker that the Nile issued from the Mwutan that he considered it superfluous to verify this assumption. When, later, on his return journey, he came to the Nile near Ibrahimija, in the land of the Madi (3°, 34' north), he ascended an elevation and saw the course of the river for about twenty miles back, and here again lay in the east the land of the Madi, in the west Koschi and the chain of hills bounding the valley of the river in the west. Magungo and Ibrahimija lie about ninety English miles apart. From these two points Baker saw about thirty-eight miles. There is, therefore, a gap of about fifty miles, and if Baker really saw the outlet of the Mwutan, its identity with the Nile is as good as proved. But there is just a possibility that he may have been mistaken, and that the assertions of the natives are incorrect. With the same confidence he had asserted, on the basis of what he was told by the natives, the connection of the Tanganyika with the Mwutan, which is now decided to be erroneous.

#### WHAT THE ANCIENT SAVANS THOUGHT.

Apart from the earlier views of Peney, De Bono and others that the Nile arose from numerous small tributaries, and not issuing from a lake, Speke was struck with the fact that the Nile in Madi was of much less volume than Somerset river. He called it a "highland stream," and his drawing gives a very small opinion of the volume of water in the young Nile, and contrasts remarkably with the assertion

of Col. Long that the Somerset was navigable for the Great Eastern ; therefore, for the greatest ship of the world. E. Marno, in one of his latest letters, also says that the size of the Bahr Djebel (the Nile that passes Gondokoro) does not lead to the conclusion that it is the outlet of such a magnificent lake. Traders told him that the Mwutan lost itself at the northern end in swamps, and many traders assert that the outlet which Baker supposed he had seen is only a creek or bay, like Murchison creek, on the northern shore of the Victoria Nyanza. In short, there yet remain doubts which must be cleared up before the Nile problem can be definitely settled. It is always possible that the Mwutan has its outlet in the south or west, perhaps leading to the Lualaba ; that possibly the Victoria Nyanza and the Albert Nyanza, at present considered to be the lake sources of the Nile, in truth, like the Tanganyika, Bangweolo, Moero, etc., belong to the Congo system, and that the Nile springs not from lakes, but from very small tributaries which in part could come from the mountains to the west of the Mwutan.

A survey of the course of the Nile upward from Ibrahimija — an examination as to whether it really comes from the Mwutan — is now the most pressing necessity for the geography of the Nile, the key to the solving of the ancient problem ; and it is to be regretted that Col. Gordon has not long since undertaken this examination from his garrison at Ibrahimija. Twice have his messengers, with small escort, reached King Mtesa's, on the northern shore of the Victoria Nyanza, and it would be very easy for him to send a small exploring expedition up the Nile to the Mwutan. The hindrance hitherto has been the steamer built for the navigation of the Mwutan, which lay at Lado, and could not be transported beyond the cataracts ; but it would be an easy thing to examine first of all whether a steamer put together above the cataracts could really succeed in reaching the Mwutan. According to the latest information, in August, Col. Gordon had arrived with the steamer at Ibrahimija, and he will in all probability strive with Stanley to bring the Nile problem to a solution. We can therefore entertain the hope of seeing in our days the elucidation of the most celebrated of all geographical problems, one which engaged the attention of Herodotus, Cæsar and Nero, the problem of the true sources of the Nile.